

PANTHER SWAMP NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

PUBLIC USE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

August 1985

Submitted By: Jim M. Williams
Refuge Manager

Date 8/26/85

Approved By: _____
District Supervisor

Date _____

Approved By: _____
Chief, Branch of Public Use

Date _____

PUBLIC USE REQUIREMENTS
INFORMAL REVIEW FORM

Instructions: Fill in blanks and attach to Public Use Development Plan

District/Zone 4 Station Name Panther Swamp NWR Station Number 43581

Requirements	Requirement Compliance? (Yes, No, N/A)	\$ Cost Estimate to Meet Requirement (only if "No" compliance)
1. Set station public use goals	Yes	\$
2. Project a positive attitude	Yes	\$
3. Welcome and orient visitors	No	\$ 3,000.
4. Develop key resources awareness	Yes	\$
5. Provide observation opportunities	No	\$ 20,000.
6. Provide teacher assistance	No	\$
7. Maintain quality hunting program	Yes	\$
8. Maintain quality fishing program	Yes	\$
9. Manage cultural resources	N/A	\$
10. Explore public assistance opportunities for field station operations	No	\$ 2,000.

* Compliance must be filled in on all Public Use Requirements as one of the following:

Yes - Requirement category has been met.

No - Requirement category has not been met.

N/A - Requirement category is not applicable to this station.

\$ Funds estimated as necessary to meet the category requirement.
(Listed for "No" only)

PUBLIC USE DEVELOPMENT PLAN
FOR PANTHER SWAMP
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
CHAPTER 1. PUBLIC USE GOALS

National Public Use Requirement #1: SET STATION PUBLIC USE GOALS

The goals for each public use function at Panther Swamp National Wildlife Refuge are as follows:

A. Interpretation

Interpret refuge management activities and how they benefit wildlife and/or public recreation.

B. Outdoor Classrooms

Do not initiate any refuge environmental education efforts.

C. Educational Assistance

Provide material as requested, by teachers for special class projects.

D. Program Information

Communicate information regarding refuge programs, facilities, regulations, activities, and priorities to the public through radio spots and newspaper articles.

E. Fish and Wildlife/Wildlands-Oriented Recreation

To enhance efforts toward maximizing wildlife recreational opportunities reflecting positive measures to assure the welfare of the resource yet provide the broadest range of benefits for the using public.

F. Non-Fish and Wildlife-Oriented Recreation

Eliminate all non-wildlife/wildlands oriented recreation.

G. Dedicated Areas/Cultured Resources

Protect and preserve those areas which may be found in the future.

CHAPTER 2. PUBLIC RELATIONS

National Public Use Requirement #2: PROJECT A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Present Condition

Employees of the refuge should be able to answer questions concerning the refuge.

Improvements Needed

- A. Provide pamphlet boxes at various access points to make information transfer to the public much easier.
- B. All staff should become familiar with the refuge and its programs in order to provide intelligent answers to questions from the public.
- C. Establish an Outdoor Recreation Planner position.

CHAPTER 3. VISITOR WELCOME AND ORIENTATION

National Public Use Requirement #3: WELCOME AND ORIENT VISITORS

Present Condition

- A. The general leaflet lists the main roads but does not show access.
- B. Courtesy is the key to welcoming visitors.
- C. Major entrance signs list the opportunities available on the refuge.

Improvements Needed

- A. The leaflet will be revised to include access points in the future.
- B. A kiosk will be erected on the refuge and will have informational panels that will be of use to the visitor. Station leaflets will be available.
- C. Post the hours the refuge will be open to the public. Improve signing.
- D. Establish an Outdoor Recreation Planner position.

CHAPTER 4. INTERPRETATION

National Public Use Requirement #4: DEVELOP KEY RESOURCES AWARENESS

Present Conditions

- A. The general leaflet accurately reflects refuge programs and opportunities.
- B. Access to the area is primarily by off-road vehicle and there is little demand at present for auto tour routes and other wildlife uses associated with most refuges.

Improvements Needed

- A. Improve ATV access by constructing bridges over specific sloughs.
- B. Establish an Outdoor Recreation Planner position.
- C. Trails, interpretive efforts, and environmental education programs should be considered very low priority items. Some interpretive signing is desirable.

CHAPTER 5. NON-CONSUMPTIVE RECREATION

National Public Use Requirement #5: PROVIDE OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Present Conditions

- A. During winter months thousands of ducks can be seen in flooded fields adjacent to the levees.
- B. Spring brings songbirds which may be observed throughout the refuge.
- C. A wildlife calendar is included in the general brochure.
- D. Lack of access prevents the development of trails or observation tower.

Improvements Needed

- A. Establish an Outdoor Recreation Planner position.
- B. Improve ATV access by constructing bridges over specific sloughs.

CHAPTER 6. TEACHER ASSISTANCE

National Public Use Requirement #6: PROVIDE TEACHER ASSISTANCE

Present Conditions

No Activity

Improvements Needed

- A. Prepare a one page handout of Panther Swamp highlights to be used as a guide on tours.

CHAPTER 7. CONSUMPTIVE RECREATION - HUNTING

National Public Use Requirement #7: MAINTAIN QUALITY HUNTING PROGRAMS

Present Conditions

- A. The refuge has an outstanding hunting program at present, including several hunts for waterfowl, upland game, small game, etc.
- B. The hunting leaflet provides up to date information on seasons but does not show limited access.
- C. Hunting brochures are prepared annually.
- D. Check stations are manned to provide biological data.

Improvements Needed

- A. Review hunt program yearly and make changes to increase the quality of the hunt.
- B. Make the format more simple and readable for the general public.
- C. Improve refuge map handout.
- D. Establish an Outdoor Recreation Planner position.
- E. Limit seasons and areas that specific wildlife species can be hunted.

CHAPTER 8. CONSUMPTIVE RECREATION - FISHING

National Public Use Requirement #8: MAINTAIN QUALITY FISHING PROGRAM

Present Conditions

Sport fishing is open year-round during daylight hours. Bass, crappie, gar, carp, catfish, and bowfin are the most commonly caught species. Wade Bayou, Panther Creek, and Deep Bayou are suggested fishing sites.

Improvements Needed

- A. Update fishing brochures.
- B. Provide adequate access to various areas of the refuge.

CHAPTER 9. DEDICATED AREAS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

National Public Use Requirement #9: MANAGE CULTURAL RESOURCES

Present Conditions

No Activity

Improvements Needed

Cooperate with State and other local agencies to uncover and maintain any cultural resources.

CHAPTER 10. PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

National Public Use Requirement #10: EXPLORE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OPPORTUNITIES
FOR FIELD STATION OPERATIONS

Present Conditions

No Activity

Improvements Needed

- A. Try to establish a volunteer program which may be useful in the refuge management and I&R programs.